



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: April 25, 2005

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Department of Workforce Development Announces Collaboration to Improve Timeliness of Unemployment Appeals Process

IU Law Students will be trained to hear appeal cases, alleviating 5,000 backlogged cases

Indianapolis, Ind.—The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) announced today that it has partnered with the Indiana University School of Law at Bloomington to help address a substantial backlog of unemployment appeals, while improving the due process afforded to Indiana's unemployment insurance claimants and employers.

As many as ten students from Indiana University School of Law will serve as non-paid administrative law judges. The students will receive intensive training on Indiana's unemployment insurance program and hearing process, and will be supervised by full time administrative law judges employed by the department.

Ron Stiver, DWD Commissioner, stated, "Under Governor Daniels, DWD will strive to provide premier customer service to our Hoosier citizens and employers. We believe this collaboration is a great opportunity to utilize some of Indiana's brightest talent as part of an innovative solution to a problem that has plagued the department and our state for the past several years."

The announcement constitutes a unique approach to an issue that has compounded in recent years. Indiana ranks last in the nation in the timeliness of unemployment appeals hearings. Currently there are nearly 5,000 backlogged unemployment insurance appeals cases. The law students will help to eliminate Indiana's unemployment insurance appeals backlog while receiving intensive training from the Department's full-time administrative law judges.

The students were selected from a large group of applicants based upon merit achieved while in law school. They may elect to receive academic credit for their service to the State.

Leonard Fromm, Dean of Students of Indiana University School of Law, stated, "We are proud to assist the State with its unemployment appeals process and are excited the students participating will receive a great experience while performing their duties diligently to ensure all parties receive their proper due process."

Barry O'Connell, of the United States Department of Labor, Region V, believes the partnership between the DWD and Indiana University School of Law is excellent. "This is an innovative way to serve the State of Indiana and help to address a growing problem, while providing a great experience to the student administrative law judges."

The program will begin on May 23, 2005 and last throughout the summer months.